Onl Day

Electronic Political 'Espionage' Abounds in B.R., Judge Says

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BATON ROUGE (AP) — Sophisticated electronic evesdropping abounds in Baton Rouge and some of it could be used only for "blackmail or for political espionage," City Court Judge William Hawk Daniels charged today.

Daniels said Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher monitored illegal wiretaps discovered by his investigators but took no action.

Daniels, formerly Pitcher's chief investigator, said bugs and wire taps were discovered and monitored in the homes and offices of public officials, candidates for public office, prominent business and civic leaders, lawyers and "ladies of leisure." He gave no names.

HIS CLAIM CAME in a far-ranging radio interview on WLCS. It was the latest chapter in a Pitcher-Daniels controversy that began with testimony before the legislative Mafia investigating committee by the district attorney.

Asked what purpose some of the taps and bugs could have served, Daniels responded, "In my opinion, the only utility would be for blackmail or for political espionage."

It was difficult to determine just who had placed the bugs and taps, he said.

The judge named three categories of electronic surveillance—that done by law enforcement agencies, including the district attorney's office; by private investigators, and by "aggrieved persons."

He said the district attorney's office, in addition to its own taps, discovered other electronic surveillance simply by erecting an antenna on the court house and monitoring suspected frequencies.

THOSE DISCOVERED, he said, were recorded in the district attorney's office.

Daniels said he plugged into a wire tap on the telephone of Joseph Fasullo, a figure named in testimony before the committee dealing with an alleged bribery scheme in the state Revenue Department, but that he did not find out who placed the original tap.

Daniels was scheduled to appear before the Mafia committee Friday. He said he will repeat his charges under oath then.

Pitcher has said that anything he replies to will come under oath before the committee.

The district attorney told the committee last week that Daniels put an unauthorized tap on the telephone of a revenue department employe.

Daniels denied it, saying Pitcher authorized the tap.